



the pathway to success

LETTING GOD LEAD YOU TO A LIFE OF
MEANING AND PURPOSE



J O Y C E M E Y E R



New York • Nashville

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Excellence and Integrity



Excellence is the result of habitual integrity.

Lennie Bennett²¹

As Christians, we are called to be excellent. Second Peter 1:3 says, “For His divine power has bestowed upon us all things that [are requisite and suited] to life and godliness, through the [full, personal] knowledge of Him *Who called us by and to His own glory and excellence (virtue)*” (AMPC, emphasis mine). We serve God, who is excellent, and to properly represent Him, we must be excellent also. My concern is that in our modern society many people don’t know what excellence is. They have few, if any, examples to learn from.

Because I have lived a long time, I have seen many changes in our society. Although some of them have been positive, many have been negative. When I was a teenager most people were nice. They were well-mannered. They worked hard and did their jobs with excellence, and they kept their word. Quality craftsmanship was something people were proud of. People were honorable and did their duty. They valued integrity. Today, what I have described is not always or even usually the case. Mediocrity has become the norm, and people have become so accustomed to it that they don’t see anything wrong with it.

When Dave and I started Joyce Meyer Ministries in

1985, God let me know that if we wanted to be successful, we needed to do three things:

1. Be excellent in all we do.
2. Walk in integrity.
3. Keep strife out of our lives and our ministry.

Since that time, we have been diligent to do these things, and we still teach these principles to our staff on a regular basis. Dave and I also work with God to maintain them in our personal lives.

In 1985, we had very little, but we had an excellent attitude toward what we did have. Our van was old and needed new tires. But we kept it clean, got regular oil changes, and took care of other required maintenance issues. The gatherings we hosted were small, but I studied and preached as though the crowds numbered thousands upon thousands. We only had a few employees, but we paid them the best we could and treated them well. I admit that I made mistakes in how I treated some people in the beginning, especially those I found difficult to get along with. But I have since learned that we are not all alike. We need to

make allowances for one another and be rich in mercy toward one another.

If you want to be a success in life, do everything you do with excellence. Excellence is not perfection; it is simply doing the best you can with what you have.

These days, finding people to work with who are excellent and have integrity is difficult, but I am proud to say that Joyce Meyer Ministries has a wonderful staff of people who have been taught excellence. They help enable our ministry to help millions of people around the world.

Do everything you do with excellence.

CHOOSE YOUR FRIENDS CAREFULLY

God's Word teaches us to choose our friends carefully (Proverbs 22:24–25; 1 Corinthians 15:33). This is important if we want to live in excellence and integrity. Our friends influence us greatly, in either positive ways or negative ways.

Find people who are excellent, and spend your time with them. Be sure you are surrounded by people who model what you hope to become. I want friends who walk in love and are not easily angered. I want them to be flexible, emotionally stable, and disciplined. It's important to me that my friends do things on time and keep their word. I would like them to be generous and good to other people and to have good manners. I want friends who talk about meaningful things, but who also listen. In addition, I want them to know how to say "I was wrong," or "I'm sorry," and who are quick to forgive when I say I was wrong or when I apologize. I realize this is a tall order, but I actually do know a few people who fit this description, and I admire them greatly.

EXCELLENCE AND INTEGRITY GO TOGETHER

To have integrity is to be honest in all you do. This kind of honesty represents excellence. To have integrity means to act on one's strong commitment to high moral standards. A person with integrity is authentic,

not phony. They live the life they tell others to live, and they do the right thing even when no one is looking. Let me repeat: They do the right thing even when no one is looking. They keep their word and do what they say they will do.

*People with integrity do the right thing even
when no one is looking.*

Some simple, practical examples of integrity are calling someone back when you tell them you'll return their call and keeping your commitments even if you are invited to do something you know you would enjoy more.

When people contact Joyce Meyer Ministries, we respond to them. If they have a question or ask for prayer, we communicate with them. Don't tell someone you will pray for them and then not do it.

When Dave and I have appointments with contractors to do certain jobs in our home, many times they simply don't show up for the appointment or even call to let us know that they are not coming. When we

contact them, the excuse is usually “Well, we got busy,” or “We’re overbooked today,” or “The part we needed for the repair didn’t come in.” But they didn’t call to let us know not to expect them. When we make arrangements to be home on a certain day and people don’t come to do their job, we waste a portion of our day because they could not be bothered to take the time to make a simple phone call. Actions such as these are rude and lacking in excellence and integrity.

Excellence in communication is vital for anyone who wants to be a success. When we don’t communicate, it costs someone else work, time, or money. I am a communicator, and nothing frustrates me more than people who waste my time because they don’t bother to communicate. I believe communication is so vital to success that people who don’t communicate should probably reconsider whether they should be in business.

EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS

If you have a business, run it with excellence. Three times at the same restaurant I have ordered a cheeseburger to go, and when I got home it had no cheese.

How do you have a cheeseburger with no cheese? I told someone about this, and they said, “I can top that. I ordered a cheeseburger to go at the same restaurant. When I bit into it, it only had bread, pickles, and ketchup. There was no hamburger or cheese!” Problems such as these cannot be blamed solely on employees. They scream “poor management.”

Dave and I frequently go to a local deli. We usually get food to go, but recently we decided to stay there and eat. When I went to the bathroom, the door was lopsided in the frame, and I had to shove it hard to get it closed. I then recalled that the same door had been the same way when I was in that restroom several months earlier. I also noticed that the floor was dirty, and dirt was caked in the corners and along the baseboards. This restaurant does a lot of business, and the food is good, but there is no excuse for not cleaning properly and for not having the door fixed. I wonder if the food I am eating from this place is handled as casually as the cleaning and maintenance. I hope not.

Dave and I often order food to go because of our lifestyle. I can say without hesitation that nearly half

the time something is not right about the order. When this happens, it cannot be an accident. It is the result of poor management. But there is one restaurant we order from where I don't think anything has ever been wrong with our meals. This is due to good management. This is the same restaurant where someone has to retire in order for someone else to be hired. Obviously, their spirit of excellence affects all the aspects of their business.

Paying attention to details is important.

When places of business are not kept clean, when orders aren't filled properly, when jobs are consistently done wrong, or when representatives don't keep their commitment, the reason is often that people want to make a lot of profit but are unwilling to put any of their proceeds into keeping the establishment in excellent condition. Eventually businesses like this fail. It may take a while, but when they operate under principles that don't promote lasting success, they don't

achieve it. People of excellence are not lazy; they know that paying attention to details is important.

COMPROMISE

Compromise is the enemy of success and the opposite of excellence. To be excellent means to go the extra mile and do even more than required. The late Golda Meir, a former prime minister of Israel, said, “To be or not to be is not a question of compromise. Either you be or you don’t be.”²² Compromise is all around us these days. People say, “Oh, it’s just a little thing. It can’t possibly hurt.” But little things do hurt. When we compromise, it hurts God and it hurts us. It may ultimately hurt our lives and futures. To be people of excellence and integrity we must have a set of standards we live by and refuse to change them when they are not convenient.

Compromise is the opposite of excellence.

EXCELLENCE IS A CHOICE

To be excellent is a choice. It affects all our decisions and every aspect of our lives. I say excellence is a choice because we must *decide* to be excellent. Otherwise, we may allow our fleshly nature to lead us, and the flesh is always mediocre even at its best. Mediocrity is halfway between success and failure.

Here are some simple, practical ways you can begin to practice excellence:

- Always put things back where you got them.
- Don't leave messes for other people to clean up.
- If you are given too much change or not charged for an item in a store, return the extra money or ask the clerk to charge you for the item that was overlooked.
- Always say "I'm sorry" when you hurt or offend someone.
- If your job allows a half hour for lunch, don't take thirty-five minutes, thinking the extra time doesn't matter.

- Don't take office supplies—such as pens, paper clips, notepads, and other items—home for your personal use.
- If you are in business, keep your place of business clean and organized.
- Train your employees to take pride in their workplace and keep it neat and clean.
- Practice good manners. Say “please” and “thank you.”
- Be thankful and don't complain.
- If you use the last tissue in a box, put out a new box.
- If you use the last of the toilet paper, put out a new roll.
- If you drink the last cup of coffee in the coffeemaker, make a fresh pot.
- If you use all the paper in the printer or copier, refill it.

These are just a few suggestions, but you will find that the choice to be either excellent or mediocre will confront you many times each day. I believe that if you make a commitment to be excellent, it will help you in significant

ways to be successful in every area of life. I can even go so far as to say that I believe it will change your life.

I have mentioned that how we treat people is very important to our success. The Bible says we should earnestly desire the greatest and best gifts, but that there is a “more excellent way,” which is love (1 Corinthians 12:31 AMPC). If we focused more on showing love to people and less on getting what we want, we would be happier and more powerful. Then we could trust God to give us what He wants us to have when the time is right for us to have it. What He gives us will more than likely be better than what we wanted.

*Focus more on showing love to people and
less on getting what you want.*

WHAT IS INTEGRITY?

If you were to ask people today what integrity is, I think many of them would probably have no idea. This is tragic. We not only need to resurrect the word

integrity in our culture, but we also need to model it in our lives. Integrity is being honest, keeping our word, and having strong morals. It is also the state of being whole or undivided. In other words, people of integrity don't say one thing and do another. They don't live one life when people are watching and another when nobody is watching. Actually, God is always watching, and we should live with this in mind.

Those of us who have the privilege of teaching God's Word should teach principles of integrity and help people understand the importance of it. Paul told Titus to set an example by doing what is good and in his teaching to "show integrity [and] seriousness" (Titus 2:7).

Consider what these scriptures teach us about integrity:

- According to Proverbs 20:7, righteous people who walk in integrity are blessed, and so are their children (ESV).
- David writes in Psalm 101:2, "I will walk within my house in integrity and with a blameless heart" (AMPC). This means he walked

with integrity in the privacy of his home,
when no one was looking.

- Psalm 15:4 says that the one who fears and honors the Lord keeps their word “even when it hurts, and does not change their mind.” This means that you should tell the truth even if it causes you to have problems.

God promotes people who live with integrity.

God promotes people who live with integrity. Being a person of integrity may cost you initially, but it will pay off later. Here is a story about that.

Monty Roberts grew up around horses in California. His father was a horse trainer and Monty was riding before he learned to walk. This was during the heyday of Western Movies and as a child Monty rode horses in movies, often as a stunt double for child actors. He later got into

rodeos and horse shows and earned a reputation as a great horseman.

Roberts always dreamed of being a horse trainer himself, and with a wife and a couple of kids to support he figured it was time to get serious, so he went into the business. In spite of his reputation as a great rider, Roberts was an inexperienced trainer, and had trouble getting clients. He had only 4 horses to train which wasn't bringing in nearly enough money to support his family.

Roberts wasn't sure what he was going to do when an opportunity was presented to work as an apprentice with Don Dodge, one of the most well-known and well-respected trainers in the area. He was told to bring two of his horses with him.

After 10 weeks the apprenticeship ended and Roberts met with Dodge. One of the horses he had brought with him was named Panama Buck. Dodge told Roberts that when he got home he should call up the horse's owner, Lawson Williams, and tell him that he was wasting his money

having Roberts train the horse because the horse was never going to amount to anything.

Roberts was understandably reluctant to do this, as that would eliminate a quarter of his already meager income. When he asked Dodge why he should do this, Dodge responded that the most important thing he could do was always tell owners the truth about their horses, and if he did this he would soon get more than enough business to replace the loss.

Roberts went home and did as instructed but Williams didn't take the news well. He responded by berating Roberts, screaming, "You useless son of a gun, you wouldn't know a good horse if it leapt up between your legs. That's the last horse you'll ever get from me!"

Several days later Roberts's phone rang. A voice on the other end said, "Hello, Mr. Gray here, Joe Gray." He went on, "I was having lunch with Mr. Williams yesterday. He was complaining about you, but from what I heard you must be about the only honest trainer I ever heard of. Well, I know that Panama Buck horse of his wasn't any

good, and I just want to take a flyer on you. I have this horse I want to send to you; it's called My Blue Heaven."

From that point on things started to turn around for Roberts. He gained a reputation as not only a great trainer, but an honest one, and soon he had more than enough horses to train. Eventually he would even have the opportunity to train horses for the Queen of England. And it all started with following some wise advice from a mentor to always be honest, even when the price is high.²³

I wholeheartedly believe that following the principles of excellence and integrity is the reason God has blessed our ministry so much. I also believe that, as you follow them, your life will be blessed.